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SPECIAL ARTICLES



A FRANCO-AMERICAN INTELLECTUAL UNION

BY GABRIEL HANOTAUX

FORMER FRENCH MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

THE ART WORLD is opening, with those personalities the most highly qualified for representing French opinion, an enquiry on the artistic relations that the brotherhood of arms and a more intimate knowledge of their genius will henceforth establish between France and the United States.

While their soldiers are making ready to fight side by side with us, while their army chiefs are establishing the plan of a common action, while their fleets lend one the other mutual help, and their ministries are posing the bases of economic conventions, the intellectual union of the two nations is elaborating itself slowly. We would like to fix by authorized opinions the new destinies which are opening to the fine arts by this blending of two races, and fix also on what the hopes which are placed in this coalition are founded.

In order to give more unity to the answers which will be made we have reduced to a small number the questions that our enquiry may raise. We have grouped them so as not to let the attention of our interlocutors wander. We have first of all asked them if they thought that a new state of things was going to be born, notably in the artistic relations of the two countries, on account of the political, military and economic events which are taking place; afterwards, in what manner they view the development of these relations; lastly, in what sense would their mutual influence be exercised.

We addressed ourselves first of all to Mr. Gabriel Hano-

taux, member of the French Academy, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, who, as the President of the *Comité Franco-Amérique*, was especially designated to lay down the terms of the debate. The powerful writer who has reviewed the life and the work of Cardinal Richelieu, the illustrious author of the *Studies on the 16th and 17th Centuries of France*, is a fitting person to indicate the historical laws according to which the intellectual union of France and the United States will be formed.

This commentator upon the acts of the great minister of Louis XIII does not live, as one might think, in some tumble-down dwelling of an old quarter of Paris—dusty parchments do not encumber his cabinet—quite the contrary, he lives in one of the gayest quarters of Paris in a house where order and light reign. But when from his work-table he looks beyond the panes of the bay window, the historian sees a landscape capable of pleasing him from more than one point of view: the park Monceau, the most elegant park in Paris; “la Naumachie” from which rises the souvenir of Catherine de Medicis and of Henri II and the remains of the old garden that Carmontelle designed for Philippe d’Orléans—the tomb, the bridge and the little wood where formerly Madame de Genlis taught her pupils botany.

It is the dwelling of a man of to-day, well-informed of all

that constitutes the present, all that can open up the future, but who, having drawn from the lessons of the past the best methods of action, remembers this and feels gratitude toward them. Vergil, Apuleius, Horace, Livy, the letters of Cicero to Herodes Atticus, in beautiful red morocco bindings with precious iron clasps, serve as an escort, in the library, to the portfolios of Cambacérès. Books are everywhere—pictures too: a small nude of Drolling neighbors with "A Card Party" by Callot; a Holy Family of Rubens is face to face with a Gerard Dow.

DO I believe in a Franco-American intellectual communion? If I were not animated by such a faith, should I preside over the destinies of the Comité Franco-Amérique? I have always thought that a union of this kind was desirable for the two countries and the war has only strengthened my conviction. Nay, more—this conviction has taken, under the stress of events, a certain character of imperious fatality. A short time before the hostilities began there was a question of creating in Paris a sort of "Villa Medici" for the use of American artists and of endowing them on the model of the Prix de Rome with a Prix de Paris. So that the influence exercised by present conditions will only hasten an action already begun—begun without fixity, without a pre-established doctrine, without a bond between its manifestations!

I see what THE ART WORLD wants to achieve, but I must tell you that fine arts are not my special domain. Also I shall speak more as a historian than as a constructor of dogmas of tuition. I love America profoundly, but I have not sufficiently penetrated the designs, the vows, the ambitions of all the categories of its intellectual society. Although certain Americans have done me the great honor to elect me to the Historical Academy of Massachusetts, founded in 1791, I have not sufficiently mingled with the life of the whole United States to be able to call myself an expert in American civilization. Nevertheless I know by my voyages, all too short, and by personal experience, with what warmth every word that comes from France is welcomed in the Union. Nor do I ignore that American painters, architects and musicians did not wait for the Great War before they came to avail themselves of the lessons of our Masters in Paris.

It seems, then, that an Academy of Music and a French Theater opened in New York, for example, would be powerful and indispensable bonds between the two countries; that it would be of interest to found French libraries and art schools and develop there the institution of traveling scholarships for the benefit of students in painting, sculpture, engraving, music, coming from over-seas. It would only be a "codification" of customs freely agreed upon till now, but it would permit of making this union more intimate, which the nature of the people and the conditions of American life have rendered necessary.

The terms of such a contract, which to the present has been one-sided, will then be modified by the new circumstances. The future does not belong to us, but it appears to me that on the subject of the relations of France and America hereafter the past allows us to prophecy almost with certainty. We know the American nation and its admirable qualities; the nation is young, loyal, robust and animated with the rarest energy. Up to the present it

has grown in power and has not yet developed all the aspects of its genius; but it ignores fear and knows no obstacle which it cannot overcome. These are wonderful virtues to be brought face to face with those of a nation refined by centuries of civilization and of culture, and to be blended with them. A young American who adores my country said to me one day: "For me, the creation of the world goes back to the day when Lafayette set foot on American soil." Admirable and touching words, well worthy to stir a poet and to surprise the historian! But the latter, if he only gives it a little attention would at the same time discover in it a symbol as well as a truth. For this free American citizen, the origin of the Universe dated back to the War of Independence; he ought to have added, to complete his thought, that the profound unity of his country will date from the day of its entrance into the Great War.

And in fact it is their moral unity which the United States has established by participating in the struggle; it is toward the development of their intellectual genius they are working when deliberately taking the side of a noble and just cause.

I believe that this war will have a direct repercussion on the spiritual production of America! Until now the nation has been preoccupied with growth in the sense of practical activity. On an immense territory of a size scarcely inferior to that of the whole of Europe the American has cleared whole territories, created States, founded towns. After having been during several centuries only a colony, it has raised itself to the rank of an independent power; after having lived upon itself it has exported its many products to the European market. What forecasts would not an enthusiastic but superficial historian be brought to make, by applying strictly to the artistic evolution the laws of this economic process! Evidently one would be brought to expect a sort of intellectual autonomy and perhaps a predominance of American genius.

But I take the precaution of repeating that a historian who should reason in this way would be a superficial one. The laws which preside over the spiritual development are infinitely complex. The immense work to which America gave herself she did not complete, she could not complete in every domain, but from this long elaboration there was born a democratic aristocracy—the Virginian aristocracy to which Washington belonged, then those of the East and of the West which have supplanted it. The choice spirits thus constituted manifest new needs and among the first are those which can only be satisfied by the productions of art. That is how Boston has become an important musical center, how the Metropolitan Opera, New York, is classed among the great lyrical theaters of the world, and private collections like the galleries of Pierpont Morgan and of Senator Clark have been established, or the Havemeyer Gallery, where one can admire some beautiful pieces by Degas, also public collections like the Metropolitan Museum of New York, where I had the great pleasure to inaugurate the "Salle Rodin."

Perhaps it is by monumental creations the American genius will first of all shine. Of course there is no measure in common between the Hotel St. Clair where Lafayette dwelt in his time at St.

Louis and the immense Southern Hotel which has been built in the same city. But by comparing one edifice with the other, one finds there the scale of gradation in the proportions, the examination of which is indispensable to whoever wishes to study the evolution of American plastic art.

I believe in the birth of a purely original art in America, but not more than for any other country. Never in history has one assisted at the generation of an art pure and disengaged from all influence. One of the great American architects, my friend Whitney Warren, is a pupil of our School of Fine Arts and member of the Institute of France. No one in America denies the influence of France on American architecture. The technical manifestations the most characteristic of European countries have origins which are easily discernible; for example, Russian art is extreme-Oriental, Byzantine or Italian; Spanish art has received the Moorish stamp, and the first productions of French art find their source in Greco-Roman genius. But it is possible to see such a happy adaptation produced that it constitutes a sort of national art.

Rather than a renovation of our own art inspirations coming from America, I look upon as probable the permanency of our influence in the United States. I think of these lines in Horace:

*Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes
Intulit agresti Latio.*

The poet seems to me in this circumstance to be the surest of prophets. Not that I parallel the condition of France or of the United States to that of Greece or of Latium, but, in comparing them to Athens and to Rome, in evoking the influence of the first over the second, I do not think I offend either one or the other.

I do believe that Racine, Rameau and Poussin will continue to be immortal divinities for our friends, the young American poets, musicians and painters. I think that our 17th, our 18th, and our 19th centuries, our philosophers, our dramatists, our novelists, will continue to be the models for which their young enthusiasm will be impassioned; but I also think that it is probable our ancient or modern art will undergo in the influence which it will exercise in the United States some profound modifications. I see in the architecture of the Capitol at Washington, in that of the Grand Central Station of New York the example of this adaptation of style to the necessities of life.

The arch was unknown to the Greeks, or rather, not used except in their cellars and sewers, certainly not in their monumental work. The temple with them is rectilinear; with the Romans on the contrary the arch formed the principle of the basilica. This different disposition is easily explained by the accommodation of the manner of expression to the needs of the community. With the Greeks the density of the population, the relative smallness of the territory did not call for big places of reunion. With the Romans on the contrary, where the temple must serve as a shelter to an immense number of people, the arch—which with the Greeks signified a point—widened out. A poet would not miss seeing in this, like a symbol, two wings unfolding in a gesture more and more ample, to shelter a crowd more and more numerous. So I believe

that the influence of American art on ours will exert itself in the "cyclopiian" sense.

But one must not confound this deformation, which is rendered legitimate by particular conditions of existence, with the "colossal" art of Germany; this, having no plausible motive aside from a simple appetite for power, has even been applied to creations that require the greatest amount of lightness. It has been asked whether we shall undergo, more than should be, the effects of this law. But I do not think so. We shall have the wisdom to remember that the finest virtue of our race is measure. The country which has seen the birth of Descartes and *Le Discours de la Méthode* could not be unreasonable to the point of adopting forms which would suit neither its needs nor its genius. No, if an influence coming from the far-off countries of America must work upon it, this influence will take quite a different character. Again, to define it with some chance of exactitude, the historian ought to find out what impression the races which have composed it have left on the American genius. From the gentlemen-trappers who followed the Chevalier de la Salle down to the most recent immigrants, it would be useful to study each of the elements which have constituted that being, greatly endowed and so to speak new, which is the American citizen. One would perhaps then perceive that, thanks to his methods of work, his processes of adaptation and his ethical characteristics, he will be capable of exercising, indirectly, an influence on our art by the nature of the soil that he exploits, by the aspect of the landscape which surrounds him and by the conditions of life which are more independent. So paradoxical as it may seem, the American has doubtless not yet had the time, occupied as he is with clearing the soil, to contemplate the earth where he lives. Or at least this contemplation has not yet translated itself by a significant work, which could give an exact transposition. Centuries were necessary for Rome to pass in literature from the *horridus numerus Saturnius*, from the dreadful Saturnian verses to the flexible poetry of Horace. There is nothing surprising in the fact that the United States have not yet created any Georgics.

It will be our pride to help America in this childbirth. But the day that its Vergil or its Catullus is born, then it is that we may usefully speak of the influence they will exercise on our own productions. For it is certain that the vision of the landscape of Virginia or the Rocky Mountains, the ranches of the West and the industrial towns of the East will raise up unsuspected forms of art where the audacious genius of the Americans will find a virgin horizon to exalt itself.

America has had an enormous influence on our literature already. It was not in vain that Chateaubriand had seen the valley of the Mississippi. That dictated his "Natchez." Edgar Poe! is he not the origin of Baudelaire? It is probable that in the future the waves of the sea will bring to us along with the reflection of a new sky certain unknown rhythms and fashions, and that is why, in prevision of this future, it is well to provoke and to sustain every enterprise which proposes to render easier the intercourse between the literary men and artists of America and the French literary men and artists. It is another way of serving the same cause that the soldiers of one country and the other are sus-

taining at the front with weapons in their hands.

I think also that Emerson and the cult of heroes will find innumerable fertile seeds in the war which brings together once more the descendants of La Fayette and those of Washington. Do we know what William James, read in the light of these great

events, is going to reveal to us concerning the religious mystery of the French soul?

All the problems are proposed; it would be tempting peril to come to a conclusion; it is wiser to foresee and to prepare.

Gabriel Hanotaux

TIMOTHY COLE

BY ROBERT UNDERWOOD JOHNSON

I WONDER how many readers of THE ART WORLD fully appreciate the fact that every other month they are sure to find in it a work of art by a man of world-wide fame, long the greatest wood-engraver of the world, one worthy to rank with the foremost engravers of all time? It is doubtful if there will ever be a successor to Timothy Cole.

Well I remember the circumstances in which Mr. Cole began his notable undertaking to engrave the Old Masters. One day in 1882, during my service as Associate Editor of the *Century*, I was in the art department when W. Lewis Fraser, then Associate of the art editor A. W. Drake, showing me a beautiful proof of one of Cole's blocks, said: "It is a pity and a shame that such genius should be wasted on inferior originals. We ought to send Cole to Europe to engrave the masterpieces of the world's art." The idea struck me so forcibly that, on the principle that "a duty is binding upon one from the moment it is conceived" I said: "If you will give me the next fifteen minutes of your time, Fraser, I'll go with you to the publishers and back up that idea"—and off we went. We presented the project with enthusiasm and it was hospitably received by the financial powers and at once cordially approved by Mr. Drake and by Mr. Gilder, then editor of the magazine, and Mr. Cole was invited to a consultation which resulted in his engagement to go to Italy to do a series of the Old Italian Masters.

I have since found myself wondering what would have been the decision had we then been able to foresee the extent to which the enterprise would reach. I can't help thinking of the lady who dropped in for tea and staid seventeen years. In this case, beginning with the expectation, on Mr. Cole's part as well as ours, that he would devote at most two or three years to the work, the project by its uniqueness and success led from one famous gallery to another and from one series to six, until the engraver had devoted twenty-seven years to his *magnum opus*. But he never wore out his welcome with us or with the public, and fortunately the distinguished record has been made. As I have elsewhere said, I believe the day will come when collectors will ransack libraries and garrets to obtain the numbers of the *Century* having impressions of that series of blocks, while the engraver's proofs, especially those signed by him, will be sought for even more eagerly. His current work will not be in less demand.

If it be asked why Mr. Cole did not remain at home and do the work from photographs, it may be said that if we were to have an adequate report in black-and-white of the great creations of painting, it was desirable to correct the very defects and misstatements of the photograph. It was his province by thorough study of the originals to translate into wood-engraving the tones of a painting in their relation one to another. In this respect he was the first interpretative artist to tell us the truth concerning these masterpieces, and in doing this he has had no rival.

Beside this, Mr. Cole's work appeals by the command, the beauty and the range of his technique. There is a quality in his expression as individual and as poetic as Paderewski's. His blocks could be recognized in a miscellaneous portfolio by his touch, just as one would thus recognize Paderewski's playing, even in a celestial recital, though he were to play only the scales. And in resourcefulness and appropriateness of rendering the engraver is not inferior to the pianist. Whether it be the Preraphaelite, the Titian, the Rembrandt or the English school, Mr. Cole's artistic comprehension is of a masterly sensibility.

I am writing these lines as an introduction to one who is far more competent than I to expound the details of Mr. Cole's technical achievements. Mr. George H. Whittle, even before the series was undertaken, was an assistant to Mr. Drake and Mr. Fraser, and through years of this relationship he became an expert on engraving, so that, they being no longer living, he is now the keeper of the fine old tradition of the Century Art Department of that period.

For many years Mr. Whittle was (so to speak) the censor of the printing of the magazine, spending a large part of each week in scrutiny of the sheets as they came from the press. No one in America, probably, is better qualified to supervise the printing of illustrations, and it is fortunate for THE ART WORLD that his experience is at its service in such work, particularly in maintaining the standards of reproducing the series on which Mr. Cole is now engaged, and in which he is showing not merely undiminished power but new inventiveness and beauty of method. In the paper that follows Mr. Whittle's exposition of the engraver's excellence by the citation of specific examples is natural, logical and illuminating.

Robert Underwood Johnson